



MAN FROM ATLANTIS

Ahead of his solo adventure this December, *Justice League* gives us our first look at Aquaman in action, and the larger than life Jason Momoa makes a big splash as the surly superhero.

When Jason Momoa first auditioned for a super-sized role in *Justice League*, he sensed there was something fishy going on. Director Zack Snyder had asked him to read for Batman, even though Ben Affleck was already cast at that point.

"I just read the lines with a lot of attitude, like I didn't care what was on the page," he laughs. "And then Zack said to me, 'Do you know who I want you to play?' I said, 'Oh, yeah, I'll be a villain or some bad dude who comes in and fights Batman – sounds like fun.' He said, 'I want you to play Aquaman.'"

"So, I was just standing there, kind of in shock. All I could think of was the traditional Aquaman from the comics – who is white and blond and wears the orange and green costume. I thought he had to be joking... but Zack had this look on his face. He said, 'Hear me out,' and told me that he wanted the Aquaman in this film to be an outsider, along the lines of Clint Eastwood's character, the Outlaw Josey Wales. I was born in Hawaii and raised in Iowa, and basically grew up an outsider, so I

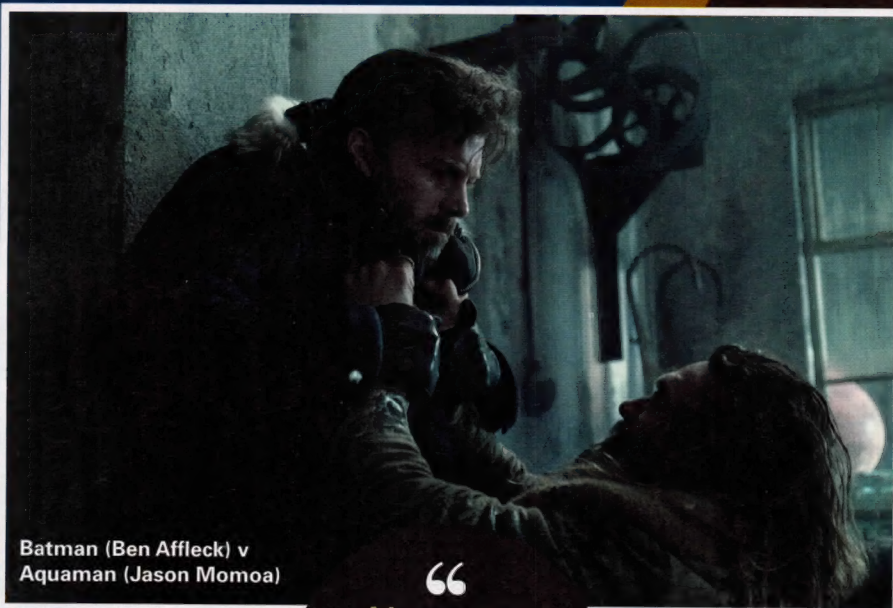
could definitely identify with that.

"I also liked that Arthur Curry is a half-breed – half-Atlantean and half-human – and was really interested in the idea of him being this brown-skinned superhero who is part of two worlds but doesn't belong to either one. I think that's pretty special. And me being a Hawaiian, Aquaman's mythology also resonated with me because we have water gods in our culture – and that goes for many islands. That's why it feels like such an honour to play this guy."

Although a big comic book fan, Momoa hadn't read a lot of *Justice League* prior to the film and promptly dived into the research side, with help from producer Geoff Johns, whom he says possesses a wealth of knowledge on Aquaman and the entire DC universe.

In playing Aquaman, he notes that Snyder encouraged the cast to invest the characters with their own personalities. "I've never played anyone like Arthur before – someone who's defiant and an outcast and a rascal. So, I got to be grumpy and ornery and exercise a lot of layers I've never gotten to bring to roles before and that was a lot of fun."

When it came to assembling the *Justice League* for the very first time on the set, Momoa played it cool



Batman (Ben Affleck) v
Aquaman (Jason Momoa)

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but admits he was quietly geeking out on the inside.

“We really loved being on this journey together, and always wanted to see each other on set. Whether it was doing team-building scenes or these ambitious, complicated stunt sequences, we'd always support each other and try to make each other laugh; it was always a joy.

“One of the great things about having these actors in these roles is that they're all just so perfectly cast. Batman is my favourite character, and when I first saw Ben Affleck in that cape and cowl, it was so cool. He's an amazing Batman. And Gal Gadot is the perfect Wonder Woman. She is unbelievable and that movie was unbelievable. She's just this powerful presence, but so warm and absolutely stunning. And I can't think of a better choice for The Flash than Ezra [Miller]. So intelligent, so witty and just a beautiful creature – they only made one of Ezra.

“And then there's Ray [Fisher] as Cyborg, and, to me, he has the hardest role – to be able to play this half-man/half-machine – and yet he brought so much humanity and gravity to it. But on set, we really had to use our imaginations to picture Ray as Cyborg. We'd all

be in our costumes, and Ray would be in these polka-dot pajamas for the visual effect component of Cyborg. So, we had a lot of fun giving him crap about that,” he laughs.

As for his own character, Momoa cheekily admits he's probably the greatest Aquaman that's ever lived. “There's not exactly a lot of competition, so in that sense, it's cool not to be Batman,” he laughs. “But it's great to get to set the tone for this character on screen, and I'm interested to see what fans think of this iteration of Aquaman. It's definitely not what they're used to seeing in the comics, but hopefully it will be true to the Aquaman they know.”

He adds that his biggest challenge was that the film provides a mere glimpse of the epic journey of Aquaman/Arthur Curry. “When we meet him in *Justice League*, he's this gruff, surly rebel, but we don't know what this kid went through to get that way or who he's going to become. We find him in a little fishing village in Iceland, among these villagers who are on the absolute fringe of society. They kind of look at him as a god because when fish aren't around or supply lines are cut off, he helps them. They never asked for it. He's just taking it on himself to protect these people and provide for them.”

With the character introduced and a lot of questions raised, Momoa promises that audiences will find the answers in the James Wan-directed origin story, *Aquaman*, which opens in cinemas on Boxing Day this year. And while he doesn't go into detail, he

DID YOU KNOW?

Australian director George Miller was set to helm a *Justice League* movie back in 2008, before the Writers Guild strike and other production issues led to its cancellation just days before principle photography was set to commence.

Justice League: Mortal would have starred D.J. Catrona as Superman, Armie Hammer as Batman, Megan Gale as Wonder Woman (great casting!), Santiago Cabrera as Aquaman, Adam Brody as The Flash, and Common as Green Lantern.

Given what Miller achieved with *Mad Max: Fury Road*, it's more than a shame that his vision for a JL movie was never realised. However, a documentary is reportedly in the works that could provide a glimpse into the greatest superhero movie never made.

does offer a teaser as to what we can expect.

“Where we start and where we end up is just going to be amazing. It really is a beautiful movie, and I feel really lucky to be part of it. James is fantastic to work with and what we shot down there in Australia was incredible.

“We've never seen an epic adventure under the ocean like this, and we haven't seen an undersea world like the one we're creating in the movie. I'm already excited to watch the movie with my children, and for other kids to see it. My son plays with Batman non-stop and it'll be cool to see what he thinks now that there are Aquaman action figures. I haven't made too many movies that my children have gotten to watch, so I'm really looking forward to that.” ☺



The Justice League

• *Justice League*
is out on
March 14